

821 ✓

V A L E N T I A;
OR THE
F A T A L B I R T H - D A Y :

A
T R A G E D Y.

B Y

T H O M A S S T E W A R T.

K

L O N D O N :

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M DCC LXXII.



T O

Mr. JAMES B——R.

DEAR SIR,

I Know no man on earth, to whom I would wish to dedicate the following tragedy, sooner than yourself; you never paid it a compliment in manuscript that it did not deserve: on the contrary, you candidly corrected many irregularities which would have rendered it less conspicuous in the eyes of the judicious.—It is now submitted to the press with my sincerest acknowledgment to my friends, and offered to you as a mark of the esteem and affection which your
good

good nature and cordiality have ever merited from me.

I have been told of one particular objection, which will undoubtedly obstruct the success of VALENTIA; that is, its bearing too near a similitude to ROWE's *Fair Penitent*. Whoever takes the trouble to compare them together, will find but one circumstance in the whole play the least culpable with regard to plagiarism: namely, " *Lysander's* dropping the letter." The ensuing scene is natural, and what every one must expect on the occasion. I looked upon the quarrel between *Horatio* and *Lothario*, as no bar to the resentment of *Palante*, or to the pride and insolence of *Lysander*. I did not imagine that the circumstance of *Calista's* fate could claim a particularity beyond example. And it is certainly an error in judgment to condemn the character of *Valentia* merely because she is guilty of the same imprudence that made another wretched. I heartily wish I had not so many instances to support

port her. I am sorry the world has known more *Lotharios* than one, and that more than one *Calista* has been betrayed.

I take this opportunity of acquainting the public, if *Valentia* gives the least satisfaction in the closet, my utmost wish will be satisfied; as it never made any attempt towards the theatre, nor was it wrote on the strength of any such prospect. I hope too they will not look for that elegance, refined understanding, and exquisite taste in me, that should adorn the productions of an experienced and well educated writer; when I inform them the extent of my erudition never surpassed the narrow limits of a few English volumes.

I should, dear Sir, look upon myself as the worst of ingrates to conclude without paying a compliment to the friendship of my ever esteemed and worthy A——R R—E. If this poor effort to fame should live after I am no more, I
am

am particularly pleased with the imagination of
having fixed to a performance of mine, a name,
that, next to your own, I would wish to transfer
to posterity.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate

And obliged,

Humble Servant,

DEAN-STREET,
June 16th, 1772.

THOMAS STEWART.

P R O

P R O L O G U E.

WRITTEN by Mr. R—E.

*W*HAT tender passion shou'd the bard invade,
Who paints the feelings of an undone maid?
How fine must be the pencil that can show
The real colour of her inward woe?
How must the agents of this mimic stage,
Feel all her horrors to express her rage?
And must not you be mov'd to shed a tear,
When such a melancholy tale you hear?

To night a muse that never sung before,
Brings such a story from a distant shore.
The rural sweets that fam'd Arcadia yields,
Her hills, groves, valleys, and romantic fields;
Pastora's promise, and Amynta's vow,
Have been the theme of many a song ere now.
Our bard delights in higher strain to sing;
He fills his scene, with nobles and a king.
An undone woman, deep oaths unperform'd,
A royal-birth day and a virgin storm'd.
And if ought fabulous appear in him,
The clime's romantic, as the tale may seem.

Oh! may no critic, splenetic and sour,
The first born of our Poet's brain devour!
Which like a tender babe he ventures forth,
To bear its weight and live upon its worth.
His heart too feels an incidental care,
A parent's hopes joined to a parent's fear.
Relieve him then, your kind indulgence give,
Sound the loud plaudit that his child may live.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

ARCASIUS, King of Arcadia.

PALANTE, his Son, in love with Valentia.

EGEON, a Nobleman of Arcadia, Father
to Valentia.

PHILASTUS, Father to Ephelia.

LYSANDER, endeavours to ruin Ephelia.

Ruffiaes.

W O M E N.

VALENTIA, ruined by Lysander.

IANTHE, her confidante.

EPHELIA.

SCENE *ARCADIA.*

VALENTIA;

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE *a Heath, with a Prospect of Woods
at a Distance.*

Enter VALENTIA and IANTHE.

VALENTIA.

SOOTHE me no more, *Ianthe* ; grief like
mine,

Stubborn and fix'd, admits no interval
Of joy.—This day that gave Arcadia more
Than many ages has possess'd her of,
A good, a virtuous and victorious lord :
This is the birth-day of the fam'd *Arcasius*,
And if my heart could know a moment's peace,
It would be now ;—now when the jolly train

B

Lead

Leads up the dance, all emulous to pay
 Their gratitude to this illustrious day.
 I too am grateful, but my loaded breast
 Cannot unburden ; and inur'd to suffer,
 Contented bears what weighs me down to earth.

Ian. Still have I wander'd thro' the woods,
 and mark'd

Thy steps wide o'er the dreary heath : oft to
 the hill

I've follow'd thee ; and to the sea-beat shore,
 Where Fladon empties in wild rage her stream,
 And drives the billows back into the ocean.

Painful, I've seen thy troubled bosom heave ;
 Lost in amaze, I've heard thy frantic cries ;
 Fearful, I've seen thee gaze upon the deep,
 And wonder'd at thy constancy of woe.

Yet more I wonder, that I'm stranger yet
 To that vast source from whence your sorrow
 sprung.

Val. Still, still remain a stranger to the cause,
 Nor seek to know what would offend thy virtue.
 Hence, to the blest companions of thy youth,
 Whose minds are strangers to the pangs of guilt.
 Follow no more a poor abandon'd wretch,
 But let me wander thro' the desert wilds
 Alone, disconsolate ; to tell my tale
 Amidst the savage race. At midnight send
 Orisons to the moon, and with the wolf
 Hold converse. And on some hard, flinty rock,
 Lay my poor head, and weep myself to rest.
 These, these are comforts such as I shall know,

For

A T R A G E D Y.

3

For lost is every other joy to me !

Ian. Why will you in the bloom of life decay ?
 Why waste the precious hours in bitter anguish ?
 Why will you nourish in your youthful breast
 A secret grief, that nips the healthy rose,
 And spreads the lilly on your fading cheek ?
 Why shall a friend that holds you dear at heart,
 A friend that feels for every pang you suffer,
 Be kept in doubt, in terrible suspense ?
 I will not leave you, no *Valentia* !—since
 From early youth together we have liv'd,
 Together let us die, if you have sworn
 To be the wretch of never ceasing sorrow.

Val. Generous maid ! yes, thou'rt my friend
 indeed ;

To thee I will unbosom all my soul,
 Make known the cause that wastes my life away,
 And banishes all peace and quiet from me ;
 Prepare then, *Ianthe*, for you'll hear a tale
 That else might shock too far thy gentle nature ;
 Thou knowest — oh shame to modesty ! —

Lysander ?

Ian. I've heard him call'd the subtle, gay *Lysander*.

Val. Oh ! fatal hour to poor *Valentia*'s peace,
 When first he said he gaz'd with rapture on her,
 When she drank deep the poison of his eyes,
 That ever since has work'd her on to madness.
 I lov'd, *Ianthe* ! — oh ! my throbbing heart !
 I fear I'm still delirious in the charm
 That haunts and hovers round me like my fate.--

Pardon my weakness — I have try'd in vain
 To chace the fond idea from my heart,
 So deep he has imprest his image there,
 That death, and only death has power to van-
 quish.

Ian. Away with these reflections ——— still you
 may

Enjoy that peace you think is lost for ever.

Val. Oh ! never, never ! — every joy is fled
 Far, far from me ! — thou know'st, *Ianthe*,
 When last th' imperious hostile king of Corinth
 Proclaim'd a war, and threat'ned to lay waste
 Our fruitful valleys and delightful fields,
 Because the spirit of our free-born youth
 Disdain'd his servile offer of alliance,
 Which meant intirely to subvert our laws,
 To plant Corinthian manners in our state,
 And own no other regal lord but he.

Ian. Alas ! too recent in my troubled breast,
 The scene of these distracting times remain ;
 I lost an only brother in these wars,
 Who ever is remember'd with a tear.

Val. I mourn the hapless youth ! — but oh !
 my friend !

Forgive me if a grief of greater weight
 Draws forth my filial tears ! — I lost, *Ianthe* !
 The tenderest she that ever bore a child !
 My sire tenacious of his country's honour,
 Among the first that flam'd with patriot zeal,
 Rose in the glorious cause of our defence,

Join'd

Join'd with the good *Acaſius* all his power,
And fought and conquer'd their inſidious foes ;
But ah ! how fatal prov'd the victory !
While by his ſword his foes unnumber'd fell,
The hand of death was buſy in his houſe,
And ſwept away the darling of his ſoul,
The beſt of mothers and the beſt of wives !
I now remaining the precarious beam,
The only ray to brighten up his grief,
He heap'd on me more tendereſs and love,
Than ever child could merit from a parent ;
And oh ! with ſhame, with deep regret I own,
His fond paternal care was thrown away,
And loſt upon a poor unnatural wretch,
That gave no heed to his preceptive councils :
Sure ſome ill planet rul'd when I was born,
That ever ſince with malice has purſu'd me !
I might been happy, but my ſtars deny'd me.

Ian. Still you evade to clear the myſtic cloud,
That lowers with inauspicious darkneſs o'er thee.
Unravel then the ſecret of your breſt,
And let *Ianthe* ſhare thy preſent ſorrow.

Val. The kind indulgence of a tender father,
Who built his hopes upon an only child,
And therefore gave no limits to her wiſhes,
Suppoſing all within the bounds of virtue,
Expos'd her to the ſubtle wiles of men.

Ianthe, thou'rt no ſtranger to their ways,
Thou oft haſt heard them praiſe the ſmall degree
Of beauty, nature has been pleas'd to give me.
Many have thrown their trophies at my feet,

And worship'd oft the ground on which I walk'd.
 How strong the flattery of wicked men?
 How weak, how easy the belief of women!
 Among the rest — oh name for ever curst!
 The vile *Lyfander*! born to be a villain!
 Born to torment me with eternal shame!
 Come — join with me and curse — curse the whole
 sex! —

But chiefly curse the stainer of my virtue!
 The base destroyer of my fame and honour!
 The fawning, flattering, perjur'd, false *Lyfander*!
Ian. You rave. ———

Val. I do indeed. — I would not curse him —
 Sure I did not curse him! — Blessings on him! —
 Curse on thyself! thou poor deluded fool,
 That could not see the snare so plain before thee.
 He did but what all men like him would do.

Ian. I tremble! — say, what has *Lyfander* done?

Val. He has undone me, *Ianthe*; — my virtue!
 He has robb'd me, ruin'd me! — charm'd me to
 my ruin!

With spells, with magic work'd upon my senses.
 Lull'd me in love, and like a thief bereft
 Me of the only treasure I possess'd. —

I blame him not — 'Tis I that am to blame. —
 I should have stabb'd him — torn him in pieces!
 I should have rent my hair — deform'd my face, —
 Nay ev'n kill'd myself to bar his course!

Ian. Alas, for pity! — — dar'd the impious
 wretch

Pursue the ruin of so fair a form?

Val.

Val. Ianthe, yes. He follow'd me at eve
 With importuning looks, and softer words
 Than ever yet breath'd from a mortal voice.
 The spheres stood list'ning, and no breath of air
 Disturb'd the melody that soothing fell
 From his bewitching tongue. — His passion rais'd
 Beyond the common bounds, gave fire to mine.
 The jess'mine grove, where oft with thee I've
 talk'd

Of innocence, of love, and maiden virtue;
 And spent the latest hour of parting day
 In mourning such as fell by their imprudence:
 That best can tell the story of my grief,
 For there I yielded all to false *Lysander*.
 But not without repeated protestations,
 That when the sun next morn had woke the day,
 The god of marriage should unite our hands,
 As he already had made one our hearts.
 He swore, *Ianthe*, with fell imprecations,
 Wish'd on his head eternal plagues might fall
 If he fell short in any point of promise.
 The morning came — *Ianthe*, think you feel
 The torment that wild expectation brings,
 The pain, the apprehension such a state
 As mine, convey'd to my foreboding breast?
 I waited — oh! how fell the bare remembrance!
 I waited 'till the middle hour of day,
 Mad with the thoughts of the preceding night.
 He never came. — I fled to Arcas' cell,
 The place appointed for our nuptial rites.
 Nor there I found him — oh the fell despair

That seiz'd my heart!—till towards the ev'ning
tide

I ne'er set eyes upon him! — then our meeting! —
Would we ne'er had met! — my looks alone
Declar'd the injury he had done my love.
He frown'd — he dar'd to frown — he look'd
displeas'd.

Displeas'd because I told him of his vow.
He would not speak, and only with his eyes
Told me his passion was already fated,
That he had tasted all that love could give him,
And after that our union must be stale.

Ian. Fie on the perjur'd, the abandon'd villain!

Val. I begg'd, I pray'd, I fell upon my knees,
Intreated all an undone woman could;
But all in vain. — Too proud of what he'd done,
And monstrous in disdain: while at his feet,
I su'd to be the bride he vow'd to make me,
He flung away with fury in his looks,
And left me lost and speechless on the ground.

Ian. Think no more on him—Banish hence
your grief—

Fly to *Arcaſtus*; he will do you right;
Assert your title, and make known your cause—
Justice alone is his—he will not see
The daughter of his friend *Egeon* wrong'd.

Valen. Ah me! *Ianthe*! — knowſt thou not the
king

For ſervices experienc'd in his youth
From the departed father of *Lyſander*,
Holds ſtill the ſon in favour of his love?

Ian.

Ian. And will not justice to a living friend
Cancel the obligations of the dead?

Has not our gracious king experienc'd more
Of *Egeon's* faith, than of *Cleanthu's* virtue?

Doth he not know the feud that has so long
Kept enmity alive between your houses?

Has he not to reward thy father's deeds
Proffer'd to thee his son in holy union?

And will not his anticipated love

For false *Lysander* turn to hatred,

When he perceives his sacred purpose crost,

And dissoluted by his secret guile?

Valen. And dost thou think that my proud
swelling heart

Will humble to make known so broad a shame?

Ian. Call it not shame—declare your in-
nocence.—

Say he was violent and forc'd—say any thing,

Rather than feed his insolence and scorn.

I'll be thy advocate to good *Arcasius*;

I'll soothe thy father to forget thy fault;

And if a maiden's eloquence can paint

The colour of your wrongs, expect redress.

Val. *Ianthe*, hold—divulge it to my father!

To *Arcasius*, to *Palante*!—oh! heav'ns!

I would not for the empire of the world,

To be the *Queen* of men, I would not have

A stain so deep made public.—Only thee,

Thee and the villain only knows my shame.

Therefore be silent—silent as the tomb

In which I soon shall rest.—No more I'll wander;

Not

Nor trace the forest like a wounded deer.
 I'll dress myself in smiles, and like the bride
 Of gay *Palante* hasten to the altar;
 And ere the priest performs the sacred rites,
 I'll bury this in my polluted breast,
 Nor stain the bed of such a virtuous youth.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE the Palace of Arcasius.

Enter ARCASIUS and EGEON.

Arc. I wonder much, *Egeon*, your fair daughter,
 Dear as thyself to me, because she's thine,
 Should on this day, this day of all the year,
 Be absent, and in sorrow waste the hours
 That should dance on in light fantastic measure.
 Why does she seek the woods, and all alone
 Wander more like an outcast than a child,
 Held dear, and dearly lov'd.—Say, canst thou
 trace
 The cause?

Egeon. Alas! my lord, I've strove in vain
 To work the secret from her.—With the fondness
 Of a tender, anxious and indulgent father,
 I've sooth'd her to disclose the latent thorn
 That stings and wounds her peace.—My care
 has fail'd:
 Unduteous to the last, she still persists
 To bear untold her sorrow to the grave.

Arc.

Arc. Perhaps the current of her secret grief
Ssprings from a well-known source — *Palante's*
suit —

Think'st thou she loves my son? — perhaps the
thorn

That stings her heart, is my *Palante's* love?

Egeon. My lord you wrong her much. — She
never yet

Or seem'd averse or distant when he spoke.
She loves him, and she glories in the hope
Of being join'd to such a valu'd youth.
Something of diff'rent nature shocks her quiet.
Perhaps the mem'ry of her mother's death
Draws from her filial heart this pious sorrow. —
But see she comes? — —

Unlike her brow to what it was before.
No sullen sadness seems to cloud her face.
Smiles sit in dimples on her rosy cheeks,
And future joys dance in her laughing eyes!

Enter VALENTIA and IANTHE.

Oh, oh! my child! my dear, my lov'd *Val-*
entia!

Art thou return'd to give thy father rest.
To pluck the pain out from his aged breast,
That thy untimely sorrow planted there.

Val. Sir! on my knees let me intreat for-
giveness,
That I unknowingly have caus'd you pain.
I grieve,

I grieve to think you misconstru'd my thoughts.
 Alas, I am not sad. — Rather a joy,
 That cannot be by joyful *looks* exprest,
 Fills all my bosom and employs my heart.
 To think sincerely on the serious rite
 That ties two hearts for ever in one bond;
 To think what happiness the pair enjoys
 When both are even, and in temper suit;
 To think what ways a wary wife should take,
 To please the humours of her lord and husband:
 For I've heard all men are not alike.
 But sure I think the choice my father's made,
 The fair, the noble and the good *Palante*,
 Is one above the common race of men,
 In whom all happiness that life should know,
 Is surely center'd, and on him I ponder'd.
 Your pardon then —

What you thought grief was joy, and when you
 urg'd

To know the cause, my blushes bound my tongue.

Egeon. My blessings on my child, — my lord

Arcasius,

Now know the secret spring that fed her sorrow?
 Love for your son — I knew she held him dear,
 Dear as herself.

Arc. And dear to me shall be

The mind that means them well; what power
 I have,

What love, what duty a fond parent owes,
 Shall not be wanting to compleat their hopes.
 Come to my heart, *Valentia*! for in thee

I read

I read our family's increase and happiness.

Val. My lord forgive me, if I have been
slow,

In paying my duty on this happy day.
For tho' I'm the last in speech, your royal goodness
Will not, I hope, deem me the last in love.
May all your days, and numerous may they be,
Be happy as they hitherto have been.

Enter PALANTE.

Pal. Where is my bride, my love, my fair
Valentia?

Why is she absent from her lover's wishes?
I sought her 'midst the beauties of the court
In vain, and vain are all its charms to me.
I live but in her presence? — Cruel maid!
Couldst thou alone in solitude's dull shade,
When all the beauties of Arcadia meet,
To celebrate this day for ever dear.
Couldst thou, forgetful of my ardent love,
Which languishes like some forlorn thing,
Bereft of all its hopes: Couldst thou, *Valentia*,
In gloomy sadness waste the lazy hour,
That here fleets onward unperceiv'd and light?
But ah! how heavy they have been to me?
Each hour, as if the hand of time stood still?
Seem'd like an age in absence of thy charms.

Val. Do not upbraid me, youth! — thou know'st
not yet

The

The feelings of my heart. — Should I declare
 The hopes and longings of a wishing bride,
 Wouldst thou not deem me forward, and renounce
 A passion favour'd more of vice than love?
 Be satisfied I do consent to wed thee,
 And make thee happy if thou wilt be so.

Pal. If! — Add not if to that transporting
 sound!

The music of the spheres is in that voice,
 And heav'n's best angel utters when you speak!
 Oh! who could know a moment of disquiet,
 When heav'n and thee conspire to make him blest?
 Your smiles will elevate the loneliest hour,
 And drive the deepest melancholy hence. —
 Father, forgive my transport. --- In your presence,
 An arduous passion ought to be restrain'd,
 Nor wildly drest in idleness of words;
 But hearts o'ercharg'd like mine, minds not the
 rule,

Tho' e'en an angry father should forbid.

Arc. Fear not a father's frown — pursue my son
 Thy virtuous love, for know *Egeon's* daughter
 Is worthy to be ador'd. — Soon as the sun
 Displays his evening beams upon the altar,
 And at his parting sheds propitious light,
 To crown the day with memorable joys,
 The priest shall join your hands — *Egeon* speak,
 Delay but aggravates a lover's pains.
 What say you? — Shall the evening see them
 join'd?

Egeon.

Egeon. Heav'n show'r eternal blessings on their heads !

Valentia's smiles confirm she's not averse, —
And my old heart bounds with according joy.
But it were well to leave them — they alone
Can best express the meaning of their hearts.

[*Exeunt Arc. and Egeon.*

Pal. And shall I then be happy in thy charms?
Shall it be given that I may call thee mine?
To call the richest gem in nature mine !
To press thy hand, to kiss thy ruby lips,
To gaze upon thy eyes, to taste such bliss
As never yet heav'n gave to mortal wish ;
Transporting extacy ! — the bare idea
Feeds such uncommon raptures in my soul,
I could grow wild with thinking ! — come, my
love ! —

We are expected at the festival ;
There let the jocund train chase every thought
Far, far away, that would with dull reflection
Look dark and lowering on our nuptial joys.

Val. I will anon be with you at the mask :
Be pleas'd to step before — I'll follow strait.

Pal. Life of my soul ! my dear, my lov'd *Valentia* !
Think on th' impatience that shall tear my heart
For every minute that you stay behind !

[*Exit.*

VALENTIA and IANTHE remain.

Val. At eve, *Ianthe* ! — must I die at eve !
Must I go hot in guilt to that dark land,
Where

Where punishment — severe and endless torture
 Waits on such crimes as mine? — I must not die! —
 I must not die so soon — a week — a month —
 Tho' ages were too little for atonement!
 You must persuade him — make him give me
 time;

My father must be won. — A little respite —
 For oh! I have a sin upon my soul
 That tears and prayers must reconcile to heav'n! —

Ian. Unhappy youth! what will *Palante* do,
 When at the altar's foot he sees his bride
 With desperate hands prevent his lifted hopes?
 What will he do, when his fond eyes beholds
 Your life-blood stream from the unwary wound?
 Will he not do a deed upon his soul
 That shall add guilt to thine? and oh! beware! ---
 Beware of suicide! — a crime more deep
 Than heav'n will wink at. --- What you have
 already

Committed, penitence may wash away;
 But self-destruction never is forgiven.

Val. Oh miserable! how my mind is torn! ---
 That were indeed a crime provoking heav'n!

Ian. Live then, *Valentia*; and bestow thy hand
 To him that best deserves it, good *Palante*.

Val. Bestow my hand to him? — impossible! —
 What? mix his blood with mine! with mine
 defile

So pure a stream! — oh! I am all a stain!
 He all unsully'd; --- chaste as virgin snow!

Oh!

Oh! never, never! yet, my friend, I'll live
To be the true repentant of that heav'n
I've injur'd.

Then since I've promis'd not to die, *Ianthe*,
Prevail upon my father to defer
Our nuptials; and perhaps delay may cool
Palante's love; for when a youth pursues
With honour, scorn turns love to detestation.

Ian. With all the energy of friendship, love,
With true affection I will plead your cause;
And if, ye powers! ye ever pity gave
To real distress, oh! soften him to comply!---
But will you to the mask?

Val. Ianthe, yes.

For there perhaps I'll see the perjur'd man;
And haply when he sees *Palante's* love,
His may return --- oh! vanity of passion!
Is he not faithless, perjur'd and forsworn?
And can I hope he ever will return?
I knew not men abhorr'd what they've possess'd,
But such the feelings of *Lyfander's* breast.
I've learnt by him, --- oh, knowledge dearly
bought! ---

Howe'er men promise, they are false in thought.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.

C

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE *a View of a magnificent Building, surrounded with Trees, and adorned with several grotesque Figures.*

Enter PHILASTUS and LYSANDER.

PHILASTUS.

LYSANDER, no; --- the court affords no pleasure

To one it has affronted. --- Here I've liv'd

Full fifteen years, an alien to the vices

Practis'd in the palaces of kings.

An upright spirit banish'd me from thence;

And here remote, encircled as you see,

With woods, I can enjoy more solid happiness

Than e'er I tasted when I was a courtier.

Indeed, the loss of my much lov'd *Barcina*

Stuck on my heart, and hasten'd my retirement.

The pledge she left behind, my little comfort,

My dear, my lov'd *Ephelia*, has since then

Chear'd up my soul, and smil'd away my days.

I know not how they have pass'd, so blest'd

I've been.

Lyf. Who would not wish to live a life recluse,

To breathe the cooler air, to traverse wide

The healthy forest, and sequester'd field;

To rise at early dawn, and o'er the heath

Pursue

Pursue the flying game; at eve to sit
 At home, and, with a few poor simple tenants,
 Old and romantic, talk of former times?
 And yet, *Philastus*, such retir'd enjoyments
 Suit not the bloom of youth. --- Your beauteous
 daughter
 Should to the court, for there such charms will
 shine.

This day, in just remembrance of his birth,
 The good *Arcaſtus* holds a general court,
 Where all that means him well are now expected;
 Why then should she lost in the forest shade
 Waste all her days, and like *Diana* range
 The brown wood, a cold and lifeless huntress?
 Send her where kingdoms are by beauty won,
 For kings will languish when they see her charms.

Phi. Too well I know the arts, the vile deceit
 Of vain pretenders, and at court they flourish.
 Too well I know the dangers that attend
 A skilless virgin, that in woods and wilds
 In mild simplicity has past her youth.
 Think'st thou a maid, brought up amidst the trees,
 That grows as they do, like them spreads her
 leaves,

And blossoms into beauty, and like them
 Is blind and stranger to her native charms:
 Think'st thou a maid so senseless of her worth,
 A maid unus'd to men, and men's temptations,
 Can guard against the subtle snares they lay,
 Or have a pride to keep her from perdition?

Lyf. Were I the lord of the wide universe,
 Could I command the beauties of the world,
 To sate my lust in an unlawful bed ;
 And when by force they dragg'd *Ephelia* to me,
 The innocence that sits like heav'n about her,
 Would strike me to the heart with awful wonder ;
 I should forget my power, and to the altar
 Lead her repenting on my former sins,
 And make her mine by laws for that ordain'd.

Phi. *Lyfander*, well I knew thy godlike father ;
 He was my friend, and prized his honour more
 Than all the riches in the mines of *India*.
 Justice he held in view, and ne'er betray'd
 Whatever fortune trusted to his care.
 Thou art his son --- his son I hope in all,
 Inheritor of all his matchless virtues.
 My child I mean to free from these loan shades,
 To send her into life. For when the grave
 Receives my lifeless trunk, alas, the woods
 Can give small pleasure to so green a mind :
 Therefore, *Lyfander*, as none else but thee
 My heart is warm to, or in whom I hope
 A husband and a guardian to my child ;
 Take her,--- but oh remember, if you wrong her,
 A father's curses shall attend thy steps,
 And heav'n shall shower its worst of plagues upon
 thee.

Lyf. A Marriage rite! --- no, while *Valentia*
 lives

I will

I will remain unty'd ; that little justice
 Is due to her. --- Sure I may conquer here,
 When one so *proud* I humble to my will.
 Now for an oath to testify my truth,
 For oaths seem prosperous to me. (*Aside*)
 Reverend father! ---
 So let me call thee, since thou'st deign'd to raise
 My hopes to be your son — if I betray
 The duty of a husband, or fall short
 In love ; if I not guard her with the truest,
 Tenderest passion ever fill'd a breast,
 May heav'n —

Phi. Forbear ! --- an oath is not requir'd ;
 It favours too much of a double soul ;
 Protest not when you would be credited ;
 An honest mind disdains to take an oath
 Where 'tis not wanted. --- Yet I trust thy faith.
 Say that you barely love her ; that you'll make
 A husband in the medium, not extreme,
 And that you will reward her as she merits ;
 That strain will please me better --- but she
 comes. ---

Now, now, *Lyfander* ! mark her innocence! ---
 Think what a crime it were to do her wrong ?

Lyf. She comes just like the sun from *Thetis* lap!
 That blushing rises from the eastern waves,
 And keeps all things he smiles upon alive.

Enter EPHELIA.

Eph. Oh! father! never till this dreadful moment,

Did I sustain a woe that touch'd my heart!
As in the grove of sycamores alone
Musing the hour I sat, a harmless thrush
Fell at my feet; breathless and dead it seem'd.
Anon it spread its pinions, and attempted
To gain the middle air; but all in vain.
Again it fell and flutter'd at my feet,
And wildly scream'd its dying agonies,
Till spent with rage it stretch'd itself in death!

Phil. Search not too deep, *Ephelia*, into nature;
We all must die, my child, and like that thrush,
Obey when we are call'd. --- But now's thy time
To live, and to enjoy the sweets of life;
Send melancholy far away, my girl;
Forget the solitude I've us'd thee to,
The spare, lean pleasures of this lonely dwelling.
To court --- to court, *Ephelia*. --- Oft you've
prais'd

Lysander's virtue, he shall be your guide;
His care shall shield and guard your innocence.

Lys. Fair excellence! divine *Ephelia*!
Did you but know the passion in my breast,
The transport I enjoy when thou art near,
The never ceasing anguish of my heart,
That leaps and bounds to tell you what it suffers:
And yet restrain'd by modest diffidence,
Afraid that ev'ry sentence should offend,

Recoils

Recoils as if despair froze up the current.
 Oh ! pardon thou unequall'd fair ! if I
 No longer can endure the secret pain ;
 I must declare I have ador'd you long,
 With more devotion, and more unfeign'd zeal
 Than saints their deity --- refuse not then
 To pour thy healing balm into my wounds !
 To call me back to life ; for oh ! I die !
 If you refuse to save me. --- Well perform'd,
 She cannot chuse but yield to such a speech. (*Aside.*)

Eph. I know not, Sir, by what interior power
 I feel more warm to thee than all mankind,
 Few have I seen, therefore unskill'd in love ;
 I know not in what words it is express'd ;
 But yet I've heard it is a simple thing,
 That lurks about the heart, and oft is seen
 Silent and languishing in lovers eyes.
 I never saw thy eyes look languishing ?
 I never heard thee sigh ; I never saw thee
 Wreath thy arms and look as lovers do ?

Phi. 'Tis not with men bred up amidst the
 world,

In famous cities and in splendid courts,
 As with your rural clowns who tell you tales
 Of love, plain as their rustic garb, because
 Their tongues are strangers to expressive passion.
Lyfander loves you, and tho' in the dress
 Of publish'd eloquence he speaks his love ;
 Deem it not less sincere, because 'tis more

In pompous stile address'd. --- Enough you've
known

Of rude rusticity. --- You must from hence,
And learn the finer arts; --- you was not born
To live for ever in the Sylvan vale :

A better fortune waits you; as for me,
Old and regardless of a better state,
Contented still I will remain recluse,
And pass my time among my faithful servants.

Eph. The little knowledge I've already learnt,
Tells me obedience is a parent's due.
I have no other will but yours.

Phil. 'Tis well.

To see thee happy in *Lysander's* arms
Will just complete my wishes. --- Lead *Lysander*, ---
I may to see the priest perform the rites,
To-morrow pay a visit to the city.
And when you see *Arcaſius*, you may say,
I sent my child in honour of the day.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *the Palace --- a mask --- in which is
sung the following :*

Hail to thee our guardian sun !

Hither send thy glorious ray,

As thro' azure tracks you run,

Smile propitious on to-day !

Bless the man you kindly gave

Arcadian liberty to save ;

Who

*Who from the yoke of Corinth held
By bold decision in the field ;
The strength and glory of our land,
And trod on those that would command,*

*Auspicious pow'r ! be guardian still,
Turn aside the shaft of ill ;
Grant his heart may never know
Open grief, or secret woe.*

*Hear ! Arcasius ! hear the lay !
Thus our gratitude we pay ;
Live o'er thy foes to have command,
Live, live long to bless the land.*

CHORUS. *Hail, &c.*

Enter ARCASIUS.

Arc. See that my house be open, free to all,
Send round the goblet, and let music raise
The hearts of those who honour me to-day.
He is my friend who revels on this day,
And welcome to my heart. --- Give all a welcome.

Valentia and Ianthe masked, come forward.

Val. Ha! --- by my fears 'tis he! --- observe,
Ianthe? ---

Mark every gesture --- or 'twere well to speak. ---
Accost the villain --- tell him I am here! ---
And like a thunderbolt from heav'n shall crush
That thing he seems t' admire, and he to atoms!
Lyfander

Lyfander and Ephelia unmask'd, come forward.

Lyf. What say you, fair *Ephelia*? --- does this
grandeur

Look like your leafy groves and barren wilds?
Does these angelic and these godlike forms,
Look like your home-bred maids and simple
swains?

Here thick as stars you see resplendent beauties,
Each striving to outdo in brilliancy,
And all the circle like one glorious sun!

Eph. With wonder and amazement I behold!
Nor think it strange, if I compare this scene
To what my fancy oft has form'd of heav'n!
Here comes a goodly figure. --- Why should one
So form'd, conceal a face that must be fair?

Lyf. I'll speak to her --- perhaps at my request
She may unmask. --- Sweet lady! ---
By your elegance of shape, you should be fair.
Prithee, pull off that dark eclipse, and shew
Thy sun unclouded.

Kal. unmasking. Yes! thou monster! ---villain!---
Detested hypocrite! --- behold a form,
Which thus beheld, should strike thee to the
centre!

Where are thy vows, thy protestations now?
Thou hast betray'd me! --- blasted all my fame!---
For which if you refuse to do me justice,
I'll haunt thy steps, and like an apparition ---
The ghost of what I was, --- at dead of night
Fearless I'll come, and at thy window scream

Such

Such hideous and such sad lamenting cries,
 That thou shalt tremble as at sudden doom,
 And feel the dreadful torment of the damn'd!
 For thee! who'er thou art---take note and shun---
 Shun that dire basilisk!--he is betroth'd---
 His soul is pledg'd!--he is another's right!--
 Oh! I am mad!--mad at our sexes folly,
 To see how easily they fall a prey
 To man's incontinency!--curst! curst sex!--

Eph. A sudden horror freezes all my soul!
 I shudder at this woman's wretchedness!
 She is not sure the victim of *Lyfander*?
 Or does she envy that he seems to love me?
 It must be that, --- perhaps he has been gay,
 And made some pleasing comments on her
 beauty.

Howe'er it is I'll take her friendly council. (*Aside*)
 Art thou acquainted with this lady, Sir?
 She seems as if some former contract had
 Indissolubly riveted your hearts.

Lyf. Oh! Conscience! now thou sting'st me to
 the soul!

Unfortunate that she should meet me here!--
 I must endeavour to acquit myself! (*Aside*)
 —Some lunatic—some wand'ring madwoman,
 Who bears about some visionary evil,
 Some fancy'd shame, or some cold lover lost;
 She needs must fancy every one she sees
 The robber of her virtue—leave her—leave her—

The

The next she sees shall father her disgrace,
All are alike to minds wild and unsettled.

Val. I am not mad, nor lunatic, nor wild—
Or if I am, 'tis thou hast made me so.
Thou hast sunk my senses to so low an ebb,
I know not whether in the upper air
I dream my misery, or in that depth
Where the immortal soul, that has done ill,
Feels everlasting torment! --- I'm uncertain
Whether I'm myself! --- Oh! would the sum
Of all I've felt were one continued dream,
That I might wake pure as I went to sleep!
But I am curst---curst in reality!---
I am not mad!--- I do not sleep nor dream!---
I know thee, thou insulting monstrous man!
Thou'rt stamp't upon my heart---upon my shame!
Thou art, --- but I'll not idly spend my rage---
Or do me right, or thou shalt never know
A moment's peace---let me be wretched with thee
So I may preserve my honour. --- Another
Thou shalt not be!---think not to hide thee from
me?

I will pursue thee wheresoe'er thou go'st;
This world shall not protect thee!---No! nor that
To come!---if you refuse to right me here;
I'll follow thee with vengeance after death,
Pursue thee thro' the shades in such despatch,
That injur'd ghosts from treach'rous lovers freed,
Shall wonder, yet applaud the righteous deed!

[Exit with Ianthe.

Lys.

Lyf. How fierce, how frantic, and how wild she seems!

I never saw a passion work'd so high,
And borne so far beyond the bounds of reason!
And more, 'tis strange she should be resolute,
And fix her shame to one she never saw!

Eph. Hast thou then never seen her?

Lyf. Fairest, no.

She is some poor forsaken frenzied creature,
Hunted by some imaginary wrong,
And raves and utters what she never knew---
But see! the king approaches.

Enter ARCASIUS and EGEON.—Attendants.

Arc. Welcome, *Lyfander*---lovely fair one,
welcome.

Lyf. Royal *Arcasius*!--your old friend *Philastrus*,
Remembering the day that gave thee birth,
And holding it for ever dear, has sent
His dearest treasure, his belov'd *Ephelia*,
To signify his gratitude and love.

Arc. Welcome again, fair daughter of my
friend!
Tho' peevish and averse to courts himself,
He honours them by such a beauteous presence.

Eph. If rude I am, and skilless in the ways
Of polish'd ladies, let my blunt sincerity
And humble thanks, tho' weak, at least endeavour
To shew my heart is grateful for your goodness.

Enter

Enter PALANTE.

Arc. *Palante*, hasten to the inner palace;
Bring forth thy love, *Valentia*;—she'll be happy;
And prize the acquaintance of so mild a maid.

Pal. My evil fate's abroad!—as now we talk'd
Of joys unborn, and happiness to come;
Like subterraneous winds that swell their bounds,
She burst in fury, and in sudden fled,
As if an evil spirit pursu'd her steps!

Egeon. Mysterious misery!—my aged heart
Knocks at my breast, and tells me all's not well.
She never us'd to vex my quiet so.

'Till late I ne'er observ'd a frown upon her,
Ne'er heard her sigh; but chearful all the day
She danc'd and sung, and kept my heart alive.

Arc. Too well I know the cause—'tis plain
She's false.

She loves not my *Palante*—all her grief
Springs from the near approach of their alliance.
'Twere well to let her know, if she's averse,
Force never shall be us'd.—Against the mind
'Twere heinous to persist.—She may be sworn,
Plighted to bless another with her love.

Pal. Oh! say not so, my father!—That harsh
strain,

Quick as mercurial drops flies thro' my heart,
Boils in my veins, and sets me all on fire!
Shew me the villain!—the atrocious thief,
That has by stealth stole on her easy heart,
And robb'd me of that gem inestimable.

Let

Let me behold him, that I may at once
Rush on his throat, and tear up by the root
His treacherous heart that dares usurp my right!
But 'tis a dream!—she will—she must be mine!
She is not false.—I cannot live without her.—
She is alone the happiness I wish for.
My all of bliss! And shall I tamely yield,
And calmly give her to another's hopes?
No!-----
Since life I care not for, bereft of her,
I'll make her mine, or die in the attempt.

[Exit.

Egeon. Why is the autumn of my days im-
bitter'd

With such affliction as in youth I knew not?
Grey hairs like mine should pass on to the grave
Easy and unmolested.----Oh! my child!
What hopes I form'd of thee?----What flattering
hopes!

Well pleas'd I thought to quit the stage of life,
To yield me to my last my peaceful mansion,
Having no weight upon my parting soul,
As I conceiv'd thee blest to thy own wishes;
But oh! how bitter is the disappointment!
It weighs me to the earth with deadly sorrow,
And soon will lay me level with the dust.

Arc. Be comforted, *Egeon.*---Bare surmise
Cannot condemn the maid.---Yet all may prosper.
Come

Come beauteous fair---we will procure thee company,

That will divert thee from this scene of sorrow.

[*Exeunt.*]

LYSANDER *solus.*

Ay; take her hence.---Be careful of her virtue.
For if its basis is too fix'd to move,
I'll undermine it, and subdue the fabrick.
Who'd choose to walk in the dull road of marriage,
When marriage pleasures are so easy purchas'd?
This dainty virgin, tho' she has seen *Valentia*,
Dreams not I am the cause of her undoing.
Blest ignorance! --- she may be easy won;
Nor think of ruin, when she is undone;
Taste all the transports of a single life,
Then virtuously submit to be a wife!

[*Exit.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

A TRAGEDY.

33

ACT III.

SCENE EGEON'S House.

Enter EGEON and IANTHE.

EGEON,

N O more---plead not for her---she has broke
my heart!---

What sue for respitance---for time to think!

Has she not promis'd, that this evening's sun

Should see her given in marriage to *Palante*?

And dares she to evade her own consignment?

Dares she to play with vile dissimulation

Upon her father's honour, and her own virtue?

Ianthe, go, and bear her this from me:

If she refuses to perform her promise,

I will renounce all claim to her --- no more

She shall behold her injur'd father's face,

I'll banish her for ever from my love.

[Exit Ianthe.]

EGEON *solus.*

Hard task upon a tender parent's heart,

That is tormented with a wayward child!

Arcaſius will no longer brook indifference.

And, but *Palante* loves her to distraction,

I fear he would retaliate all her scorn.

D

A youth

A youth so highly born, so nobly bred,
 So good, so valu'd, so completely fashion'd,
 Might tempt the fairest princess.--Strange that she
 Should be so blind to such unequall'd worth.

Enter VALENTIA and IANTHE.

In tears! and is it thus you meet your father?
 Thus on the eve of your intended nuptials?
 Are these your bridal looks?---those baleful drops
 The dew to sprinkle *Hymen's* sacred altar?
 Those deep-fetch'd sighs, those heavings of the
 soul,

That seems as if thy nature shook within thee,
 Are they the expressions of a love-sick mind?
 Are these the symptoms of a willing bride?
Valentia, no---Why didst thou leave the palace,
 And fly as if some evil spirit drove thee?
 Some lurking crime must hang about thy heart,
 And I am bent to know it---Therefore speak?
 Forget not I'm thy father, nor forget
 I have a power that should command a child;
 And tho' neglected long, I am resolv'd
 To put that power in practice---Speak, I say?

Val. Oh! Sir! ---

Egeon. Nay, do not kneel,---nor drag me thus,
 Without thou mean'st to sue for my forgiveness,
 And lay thy secret malady before me.

Val. Oh! drive me not away!---- I am thy
 daughter!

Thy Valentia! --- Armenia's Valentia!---

Look

Look in my face and spurn me from you hence?
Tread on me;---lay me level with the earth;
And if a father's power extends yet farther ---

Egeon. Oh nature! how thou works within my
breast—

Valentia, rise. ---

Val. I will not --- Here I'll cling!
Cling as if death contracted all my nerves.
Thou art my father!---Thou shouldst pity me!
I'm torn---distracted!---All the pains of hell
Cannot come up to mine!---for mercy's sake!
For heaven's ---- for yours ---- for mine prevent
our union!

I dare not---cannot----must not wed *Palante*!

Egeon. What do I hear?---Ha! dare not!
cannot! must not! ---

Not wed *Palante*?

Val. No! --- Impossible!
Sooner shall heav'n and earth be join'd together!
The sun shall turn to darkness, and the moon
Roll in his orb and carry on the day!
Time past shall come again, and things prodigious,
Strange and unnatural, become familiar,
Ere I consent to wed *Arcaſius*' son!

Egeon. Hence from my sight! thou worse than
poison to me!

Val. Yes, now I'll go since you command me
from you.

Tho' lag in duty, now I will obey.---

Ianthe, come!--my only comfort, come!

To darkness now, to caverns and to woods.
 Why should I wander in the sight of heav'n,
 Thus desolate, abandon'd, and forlorn?
 Even by a father punish'd; driven from him
 In the deep storm of passion!—Oh! farewell! —
 Farewel, my father!—never, never more
 Shall this detested form appear to plague thee.—
Ianthe!—when you see me pale and stretch'd,
 Stretch'd in the arms of death!—you may relate
 The mournful story of my wretched fate!
 See me laid low where all my woes will end,
 Be then, as thou art now, my tender friend.
 Defend, if thou should'st hear a busy tongue
 Tell o'er my faults to do my mem'ry wrong.
 Tell them I wither'd in youth's genial prime,
 And dearly suffer'd to atone my crime.
 Bid maids by my example learn to love,
 Least all pretenders should *Lyсандers* prove!

[*Exit with Ianthe.*

E G E O N *solus.*

Egeon. Death to my peace!—Did she not name
Lylander?

Did she not name our house's mortal foe?
 Hah! and betray'd by him!—for him she mourns!
 Damnation! Is the blood that warm'd my veins
 Become a stream for knaves to paddle in?
 And could my child descend so low?—to heap
 dishonour

On the bright glories of her envy'd race!

Per-

Perpetual curses on the villain's head!
 I feel my heart's blood boiling in my breast,
 And resolution arm my feeble nerves.
 'This hand shall reach his heart! — it never fail'd
 In the hot tumult of destructive battle,
 When fame and justice drew it to the field.
 And tho' now old and wither'd, still it may
 Subdue the villain that dares stain its glory.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE *a Street leading towards the Palace.*

Enter LYSANDER with a Letter.

Lys. (reads.) If yet the intreaties of a wretch for-
 faken,

Can wake compassion in your harden'd breast;
 If pity to a torn and bleeding heart
 Is due from the ingrate that gave the wound;
 If thou hast nature in thee, sure the state
 Thou hast reduc'd me to, must claim your pity.
 An undone woman's cries shall ever haunt thee,
 And goad thee with unnumber'd, inward hells!
 If you refuse completion of your vows,
 And free me from the shame you've heap'd upon
 me.

(Speaks.) Poor broken hearted wench! — well, if
 my heart

Were made of that dull stuff a lover's is,
 I might be won to pity and redress;
 But harden'd as I am, by nature made
 Obdurate ev'n to the wounds I give,

And prompted by revenge on *Egeon's* house,
 Which for successive ages kept alive
 A deadly quarrel and an endless hate
 Against a line that never did it wrong;
 My heart is satisfy'd in what I've done,
 And glories that I've touch'd his house's honour.
Ephelia now takes up my every thought
 And reigns the empress of my wishing soul.
 I'm all desire!—I must—I will possess her!—
 With gold I'll bribe th' attendants of her chamber.
 And *Tarquin*-like, while she lies fast asleep,
 Steal on her charms; and on her snowy breast
 Breathe out my love, and taste that paradise
 Of yet untasted sweets that bloom about her;
 She'll be no whit the worse when all is over.
 And when the *Hymeneal* fool shall come
 He'll be too wise to marry, if he finds
 Her virtue crack'd, or stretch'd beyond its bounds.
 [Exit, and drops the letter.]

Enter *EGEON*.

Egeon. Ha! or my eyes are false, or that is he!
 He makes towards the palace—deadly plagues
 Fall in his way, and eat him up by inch-meal!
 May ev'ry stone he treads on, prove a serpent,
 And sting him with fell torture to the soul!—
 A paper!—Hah!—*Valentia* to *Lysander*! (*seems
 to pursue.*)
 Swift light'nings strike him speechless to the
 center!

Blast

Blast him, avenging heav'n! let not such guilt
 Unpunish'd walk the earth, and in despite
 Of thine own laws profane their sacred order,
 "And free me from the shame you've heap'd
 upon me."—

Free her from shame!—out on her strumpet head!
 That should infer he has been lewd with her?
 Made her his whore—his lust's conveniency!
 And could the base, the sordid creature yield
 To lawless appetite and rank desires?
 Had she no pride to save her from perdition?
 From bottomless perdition.—For she's fall'n
 Lower if possible than there is hell.—
 Curse on her image that now fills my mind!—
 The very devils to me look not so black!
 I shall go mad and tear her all to pieces!—
 She shall not long survive her house's honour.
 I'll do a Roman justice on her, she shall die,
 And her vile minion breathe his last before her.

[*Going.*

Euter PALANTE.

Pal. Egton, stay!—bear to the false *Valentia*.
 Since she denies I should behold her face,
 For I've lamented like the bird of night
 In songs and orisons beneath her window;
 I have intreated, knelt to be admitted,
 And vow'd to die if she refus'd my love,
 But all in vain—she chid me hence—she scorn'd,
 Contemn'd my passion, and like one unblest

D 4,

I left

I left her vowing never to return :
 Bear her that love she has repaid with hate.
 Tell her, no more the object of her scorn,
 Shall wear his chains in perfect detestation:
 At least—if she's endow'd with human feeling,
 The wretch she now abhors, she soon must pity.
 Love finds a thousand ways to be appeas'd,
 And if all earthly remedies deny
 Their aid, death is a fix'd and sovereign cure.

Egeon. Away with that untimely resolution ;
 Altho' I cannot bid the hope for love,
 Study revenge !—Revenge thy injur'd passion ?
 Wert thou the keeper of *Pandora's* box,
 Pour all her plagues upon *Lyfander's* head,
 For he—pernicious traitor ! — has undone us !

Pal. Has he !—*Lyfander* ?

Egeon. Youth, I can no more !
 My heart, like pent-up streams o'erflows its mounds.
 I pity thee !—alas ! 'Tis all I can
 Bestow upon your wounds.—Oh ! from your breast
 Banish the viper love that lingers there
 And saps the verdure of your youthful heart.
 Indulge no more the fond deluding dream.
 Give o'er—give o'er in time the deadly slumber,
 And rouse thee to revenge—I will not say,
 If thou should'st stab my daughter to the heart,
 Thou hast done wrong—for she has wrong'd thee
 much !

Read there—but spare a bleeding parent's shame ;
 I cannot stay to see thy soul's confusion. [*Exit.*

PALANTE

A TRAGEDY.

41

PALANTE *solus.*

Pal. Confusion! — hell and all the keenest
torments

Work in my breast and set my brain a madding!

Lysander! oh! the fell, notorious thief!

The black contagious fiend! — and is it he?

He that has cropt the fairest in her bloom,

And like the worm that breeds in April buds,

Blacken'd her roses, and her lillies stain'd,

And wither'd all her beauties in their prime!

Can I forget she ever conquer'd here?

Can I be happy when I think upon her?

Ah! no! for ever will she haunt my mem'ry.

Still I must think, and still must be unhappy. —

But see! — Come furies to my breast, and arm

With keen revenge and deadly resolution

A heart that never thirsted yet for blood.

Let me but conquer here — let me but see

My sword dy'd deep with this despoiler's blood,

I'll yield me to the grave well satisfy'd,

Nor sleep inglorious, when I've conquer'd him

In turn, that basely triumph'd o'er my love.

Enter LYSANDER.

Lys. 'Tis strange; but somewhere hereabouts

I dropt a letter; and because 'tis near

Her father's house it makes me more uneasy,

Lest it should fall into some hand that may

Convey it to his ears.

Pal.

Pal. A letter! ---

Lyf. Hah! ---

Pal. Nay, start not, Sir, --- why seem you so confounded?

Have you been secretly plotting harm
With some lean politician 'gainst the state?
Have you wrapt up some treasonous device,
Which once discover'd forfeits you your life?
Or have you cunningly pretended love
To some poor simple maid, and, villain-like,
Contriv'd by secret methods to subdue her?

Lyf. What means thy doubtful phrase? ---
If thou hast aught to say to me, --- be plain; ---
Speak openly; I brook not ambiguity.

Pal. Well, plainly then; since thou wilt know
thy danger,
The letter which you dropt --- *Egeon* found!

Lyf. I care not --- nay! by heav'n it glads me
much,
Much that he finds *Lyfander's* power can gall him.
Would every letter in the scrawl he found
Might prove a deadly dagger to his heart,
And drain his blood by drops, 'till he were wasted!
Think'st thou I fear *Egeon*? no! --- from me
Inform the hoary fool --- I scorn his frowns! ---
I scorn his power, and in defiance hold
The utmost malice he can bring against me.

Pal. And dost thou triumph in thy horrid
crimes?

Dost

Dost thou not tremble, lest that power you've
injur'd

Should do on thee exemplary punishment?

The hoary fool! — oh monstrous! that a good,
A virtuous man that has from early youth
Pass'd to the vale of years with fame and honour,
Should bear the scoff of such an impious tongue!

Lys. Ha! who gave thee liberty to rail?
Or to examine into others faults;

Dar'st thou provoke a rage, audacious boy!
Which once set fire to shall transfix thy frame,
And lay thee quivering at my feet for breath!

Pal. No fiend! — let this — this rivet thee to
earth!

Behold thy deeds! — the wound thy fallacy

Has given the fairest she that ever fell

A prey to false, injurious, wicked man:

From this I've power to rail! — from this —

That has for ever stain'd a virtuous race,

And drove me even to the last despair!

Lys. Then be despair thy portion. May'st thou
wed

This woman I've enjoy'd, and never know

From thence a moment's quiet. — May the fruits

Of our luxurious pleasures prove a brat,

To goad thy sight, and keep thy mind in torture.

Still may'st thou think on what *Lysander* did,

And bear about the branch of infamy

He grafted gloriously upon your head! —

Yes!

Yes! treasure up her scroll,—should she refuse thee,
That will remember thee, — I am the cause!

Pal. Oh! villain black as hell! — and surely hell
Shall be thy recompence for this transgression!
Traitor unparagon'd! — let this decide,
In sight of heav'n and yon resplendant orb,
The difference 'twixt an upright soul, and one
Stain'd with the blackest guilt. —

Lys. I would not kill thee; —
For that were sending thee to taste such bliss,
As here on earth thou never shalt enjoy. —
Put up thy sword. —

Pal. Yes! — deep into thy heart?
Or turn thee, coward! or I shall rush at once
And glut my weapon with thy hated blood.

Lys. Nay, if thou wilt die — die! — and in hell
May'st thou prove torments such as here I made
thee! (*They fight.*)

Enter VALENTIA and IANTHE.

Val. Oh! mercy! — here! — here in this detested
breast

Sheathe your enraged steel! — what? dost thou
shrink?

Will neither be reveng'd, when thus I offer
My bosom dauntless to your naked points!

Lysander! strike! for in thy looks I read
The life I bear's a torment to thy sight.

Palante, strike! tho' thou wouldst wish me live,
My life's too little to atone thy wrongs.

Thus

Thus 'twixt ye both I stand the fatal cause
Of your untimely quarrel ! --- both then strike !
And end at once a being loath'd and hated,
That wants but some kind hand to give the blow.

Lys. Well dost thou shrink behind a woman's
fears !

Whose presence must protect thee; --- but
remember !

When next we meet --- expect to find no coward.

[*Exit.*

Pal. A most unequal coward, whose heart ev'n
now

Shrinks to its inmost cell ! --- I would pursue thee,
Did not a weightier business keep me here. ---
Madam, --- no longer with a lover's tongue
Must I in love-sick harmony salute thee,
Tho' still my heart, bound in your cruel chains,
Disdains another love ; and to the grave
Shall bear unstain'd, the flame that first inspir'd it.
Oh hadst thou ! --- but --- 'tis done --- the die is cast ---
Reflection's vain, for time cannot return. ---
I would advise thee shun the ways of men ;
But chiefly that insatiate monster --- he !
With whom thou'lt --- oh ! my brain is crack'd ! ---
Fly to some cavern --- to some hollow cave,
And there devote thy days to angry heav'n ;
Implore for mercy ! --- for you need it much.

Val. And wherefore dost thou thus presume to
give

Such admonition --- such unsought advice ?

Pal.

Pal. Fie, fie! thou dost not well thus to assume
An ignorance that makes thy guilt look blacker.
Blush --- rather blush! --- fallacious, wicked
woman! ---

To heav'n and to me, whom most you've injur'd,
Unfold the horrors of thy guilty breast:
Acknowledgment may expiate thy fault,
And penitence thy pardon buy in heav'n.

Val. Such goodly council might the pulpit
grace,

And pity but thy dull, thy lazy spirit
Had been train'd up to preach amidst a crowd,
To point their sins — thyself the greatest sinner;
For 'tis remark'd, that those who sin the most
Do catch the shadow of a fault in others.

Pal. Oh weak defence of seeming innocence!
I would not — but thy confidence in guilt
Demands I should be just, and to thy eyes
Display the deed thou hast committed. — Oh!
'Tis foul! 'tis horrid! — here behold thy shame!
Be not alarm'd; — if thou couldst thus be guilty,
Shame and confusion has no part in thee,
And mere obduracy makes up thy feeling.

Val. Give me the scrawl — let me peruse my
shame! —

Pal. No! — to the latest hour of life I'll keep it,
A monument of thy unequall'd virtue!
Be satisfy'd, the names in this contain'd
Are false *Lyfander*, and undone *Valentia*!
Ha! — Is't not so? — what? dost thou turn away? —

Has

Has thy own actions quite confounded thee?
 Dost thou repent — or art thou innocent?
 Perhaps the villain forg'd? — it must be so. —
 Oh! I can see no guilt upon thy face!
 Thou'rt fair as heaven, and as nature pure,
 When guilt lay dormant, and her sister vice
 Shrunk with the rebel angels into regions
 Dark and fathomless! — come, injured charmer!
 Come to my arms, and in that fold forget
 The low detraction of the villain's pride.

Val. Stand off! thou greater villain! idiot!
 fool!

Think'st thou to make a senseless plaything of me?
 To turn me to thy purpose — make me supple,
 And yielding to the caprice of thy will?
 No, jealous Sir! from hence believe me that
 Which thou already meanly hast suggested.
 I would I were a scorpion or a toad,
 That with my venomous and baleful looks
 I might for ever fright thee from my presence.
 The promise of my hand I lately made thee,
 I here revoke. — Intreaties shall be vain,
 No power shall force me to consent again
 To wed a man I ever must disdain.

[*Exit with Ianthé.*]

PALANTE *solus.*

Pal. By heav'n she's false! this is too clear a
 proof!

I fondly hop'd this loose phænomenon

Had

Had in the wanton hours of dissipation
 Dropp'd from *Lysander's* gaiety. In cups
 Men do things inconsistent with their reason,
 And often stain a lady's reputation
 To gain th' opinion of their loose companions.
 But ah! how true! — how fatal is this scrawl?
 How true a villain has *Lysander* been?
 How true a wretch *Valentia's* made herself?
 What man can comprehend the mind of women?
 He may as well pretend to sound the gulph
 Where never yet the plummet line could reach;
 He may as well stand on the sandy shore,
 And ask the waves the reason why they roar.
 He may as well ask of the winds their source,
 And why so suddenly they change their course;
 Examine nature, and from thence conclude
 The reason why we're bad, and why we're good.
 He may as soon the chain of causes find,
 As sound the bottom of a woman's mind.

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV.

SCENE An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter ARCASIUS and EGEON.

ARCASIUS.

AND could *Lysander* act so much the villain?—*Egeon.* Royal Sir!

This hand had prov'd it on him—but an act

Long since establish'd, call'd the *maiden law*,

In which both parties are to suffer death;

Who by unwarranted and loose connection,

Brings down dishonour on a noble house,

Withheld my vengeance for a nobler use.

Arc. By this, they both should die.*Egeon.* Inflict it then!

Decree their punishment—let racks and cords,

By inchmeal torture them, let that foul blood

That issu'd from my veins be spilt before me!

It will appease the fury of my soul,

And drown the shame she has involved me in.

Arc. And wou'dst thou, lord *Egeon*, have this
day

Stain'd with thy daughter's blood?—Shall I

inclin'd

To mercy—to forgive—forget humanity?

If all were punish'd equal to their crimes,

E

Too

Too soon we shou'd perceive the world grow thin:
Lyfander's father well deserv'd my love,
 And shall I for his worth destroy his son ?

Egeon. Not for his worth, but for his son's
 defaults.

He must not with impunity commit
 Such deeds as take away the life of others ?
 His house—his family were ever foes
 To me and mine, and well he has display'd
 The hatred that rankl'd in his heart.—
 Oh ! Royal Sir !—as Justice is the scale
 In which you weigh your actions—
 Let not a living monument of shame
 Where'er I turn me, stare me in the face ;
 Let not the busy world reviling say,
 Behold the fruits of old *Egeon's* loins,
 The harlot of *Lyfander* !—and behold
 The proud seducer of his fame and honour !
 Oh scorpions to my heart ! --- he must not
 triumph ---
 He shall not --- no ! --- these hairs tho' froze with
 age,
 This trunk tho' sapless, wither'd and decay'd,
 Shall never fall, but in *Lyfander's* ruin. [Exit.

ARCASIUS *solus.*

Arc. I would be merciful---I would be just.
 In justice to the wrong *Egeon* suffers,
 I would inforce the rigour of the law ;

In

In pity to *Lyfander's* youth and fortune,
I would be merciful and spare---

Enter PALANTE hastily.

Pal. Oh! spare him not?---
If not in justice to *Egeon's* wrong,
In justice to thy son, decree his fate;
I am the greatest sufferer in the cause,
And nature sure must plead upon my side.
Oh! Sir! imagine what a pain it is
To be depriv'd of every social joy
Fond hope can build, or ravish'd fancy paint?
Think what it is, wer't thou so young as I
To have the genial blood stopt in its course,
And blasted by a pestilential fiend?

Arc. I would avoid the foul pernicious air.
Forget, my son, the cause of your distress;
Forget *Valentia*---drive her from your heart.
You'll say I am severe---but Oh! *Palante!*
This heart is torn with agonizing sorrow:
I know the pangs of disappointed hopes,
I feel *Egeon's* grief; and partly share
The dreadful sufferings of *Valentia's* breast.

Pal. Oh! if thou canst so tenderly partake
Of our affliction, let that pity pour
Just vengeance on the villain that has caused it.

Arc. *Palante*, thou hast ever known me back
ward,
Laggard in punishing a fellow-creature;
Crimes more atrocious I could easy spare,

But as it nearly touches mine own peace,
As thou requir'st, as old *Egeon* sues,
I here denounce *Lysander's* banishment.

Pal. Oh! Sir!----

Arc. No more, my son,---I'll hear no more.---
This day shall not be stain'd with human blood;
Nor shall the four and twenty moons decreed
For holy rites, and worship to the power
That gave us conquest o'er the arms of Corinth,
Be blemish'd with the life of any subject.
'Tis punishment to bear about his guilt,
Surpassing all the deaths we can inflict.
I trust in thee to see my will perform'd,
See him sent speedily to banishment.

[*Exit Arcasius.*

PALANTE solus.

Pal. To banishment!---to hell!---and shall the
villain

Bear to another land *Palante's* shame?
Shall he, exulting, tell in foreign courts
He triumph'd over great *Arcasius's* son,
And crop't in prime the flower of all his hopes?
By all the *demons* of revenge and hate!
He shall not live a day in my despight.
The sentence past, I'll speedily prevent,
And death's dark realms shall be his banishment.

[*Exit.*

SCENE.

SCENE *the Dwelling of PHILASTUS.**Enter PHILASTUS solus.*

Phil. I know not---but my mind presages something

Of discord with the hopes I lately form'd:
 The hours have pass'd but slowly, and my heart
 Is borne about in unaccustom'd motion,
 My mind is agitated---full of doubts,
 Lest some ill fate should happen to my child.
 I am not sure mistaken in *Lysander*?
 He will not prove a traitor to his trust?
 He cannot---she is faithfully attended,---
 Her menials will protect her from assault.

Enter a Servant.

Ser. Two ladies from the court
 Seek for admittance, something of concern
 They have to unfold.

Phil. Ha! from the court!
 Heav'n guard my child! --- Go, give them
 entrance; *[Exit Servant.]*
 The sight of ladies here are new and strange,
 And strange the business that must bring them
 here.

Enter VALENTIA and IANTHE.

Val. Forgive this importunity, grave Sir!
 If we have by untimely indiscretion

Prest on your solitude, we hope the cause
That brings us here will favour our excuse.

Phil. Thou art excus'd ---- proceed ---- explain
the cause?

Val. Thou hast a daughter?

Phil. Yes! ---- say, what of her?

Val. Thou'st promis'd her in marriage to
Lyfander,

Under who's care she visits now the court?

Phil. Heart! cease your throbbing and be still
a moment!

I have a child ---- at least some hours ago

I had, and sent her with *Lyfander* hence

To pay the honours of the day at court.

Say, hast thou seen her?

Val. Oh! how frail art thou!

Wert thou a woman, senseless grown with years,

Bereft of feeling, hearing, speech and sight,

A dying dotard, or a second child,

Justice could not excuse thee! being a man!

How much beneath their boasted penetration,

Sense and superior wisdom hast thou acted?

Had'st thou thy eyes, and could'st not see *Lyfander*!

Had'st thou thy sense, and could'st not sound his
depth?

Had'st thou thy hearing, and yet could'st not hear

His horrid deeds of villainy and vice

That's borne about by every breath of air!

Had'st thou thy speech, and could'st not with
such words,

As

As might sting deep his perjur'd treach'rous heart,
 And send him with remorse and shame away?---
 But oh! how empty is this altercation?
 I cou'd not, ev'n when the villain blaz'd
 With hot desire, and ruinous assault,
 See thro' the veil that hid his dark deceit.
 Why then—

Phil. Oh! Gods! you put me on the rack!
 Consider, maid, I'm aged and infirm!
 Give me to know my fate; but let the stroke
 Be light, lest I fall down and die before you!

Val. Thou might'st as well, when the tempest-
 tuous seas,
 By warring winds are lifted mountains high,
 And form'd in numberless devouring gulphs,
 Have sent thy daughter in a broken bark
 To seek her fortune on a distant shore,
 As given her to the care of false *Lysander*!

Phil. Say that she's dead! — but say not she's
 undone!
 She has not been dishonest --- no! --- thy tongue
 In vain attempts to fix a lie upon her.
 The precepts I have laid—her father's pride,
 Which raises up her soul, will sooner sheath
 A dagger in her blood, than basely yield
 Her virtue to a fell assassin's stab.
 Ha! weep'st thou! — gracious gods! there must
 Be more in her thoughts than I can fathom.
 Say, what thou art, and how thou know'st my
 child?

Val. This face, ere grief had made it pale and wan,
 When infant years, and rosy innocence
 Play'd in my features and adorn'd my mien,
 Ere you forsook the city for these shades,
 This face has often blush'd to hear thy praises.
 Know'st thou *Egeon*?

Phil. Art thou *Egeon's* daughter?

Val. I am the poor remains of what was his.--
 Oh! Sir, if thou regard'st thy daughter's peace,
 If thou would'st wish to die as thou hast liv'd,
 In fame, in honour and tranquility,
 Fly to the court --- haste and prevent her ruin;
 Her virtue now is in a villain's power,
 The lamb that by the shepherd has been left
 Forgot all night in the defenceless field,
 Is not in so much danger of the wolf,
 As she is now of pitiless *Lyfander*!

Phil. Must I believe thee! thou sad messenger?

Val. Delay not Sir --- thou may'st preserve her
 yet;

Delay not, else some sadder messenger
 May bring too fatal proofs of what I say.
 Think, when I am gone --- but spare --- oh!
 spare my shame!

As sure thou hast a sympathetic breast;
 Pity a wretched proof you now behold,
 That fell a victim to his base desires.

[*Exeunt with Ianthe.*]

PHILASTUS

PHILASTUS *solus.*

Phil. A victim!----fell a victim to *Lysander*?
 Oh! all ye hosts of heav'n! --- ye guardian
 pow'rs!
 Protectors of true innocence and virtue,
 With outspread wings, oh! hover o'er my child!
 And keep her from a fate so curst, so wretched!
 I could be womanish and shed a tear
 On the misfortune of *Egeon's* daughter.
 Oh fool! egregious fool! to trust a knave,
 To be deceiv'd, to be a tool for vice
 To play her gambols on, to give belief
 To the false music of a hellish tongue:
 Oh! weakness much indeed beneath a man!
 Now for the court, --- in safety let me bring
 My child from thence, it ne'er shall see me more.

[*Exit.*

SCENE *a Court adjacent to the Palace.*

Enter LYSANDER, *and two Ruffians.*

Lys. Hast thou e'er been employ'd in such a
 business?

First Ruffian.

When the ambassador of Corinth came
 With terms of peace to our victorious king,
 A lady of the court his heart subdu'd;
 To gain her he us'd every civil art,
 But all prov'd vain: resolv'd on his design,

He

He found us secretly, and with large sums
Prevail'd on us to bear her in the night
On board his ship, where he enjoy'd the prize.

Lys. 'Twas nobly done! ---- thou know'st the
olive grove,

That in the noon of day is dark with leaves;
Soon as she passes from the palace porch,
Which soon she will intent to view the city,
Present her with this paper, which imports
Her father's knowledge of my new disgrace,
Demanding her immediately from hence.
Decoy her from the few that shall attend her,
As if to speak to the pretended messenger.
Soon as thou hast her wholly in thy power,
Seize her, and to the happy destin'd grove
Bring her to satisfy my longing hopes.

[*Exeunt Russians.*]

So! I am doom'd to quit my native land!

To wander like a vagabond abroad! ---

Let me peruse the order of my fate.

"If after two days, by the states decree,

"*Lyfander*, thou art found in these dominions,

"Namely within the limits of *Arcadia*,

"For crimes deserving of so high a doom

"Thy life is forfeit. Sign'd, *Arcasius*."

'Tis well. --- I go not wholly unreveng'd,

I bear with me *Egeon's* boasted fame;

Arcasius too, may suffer by the action.

He may repent it, when he finds my sword

Took vengeance on his son, for his severity.

The joys I hope to taste in fair *Ephelia*

Will

Will be as sweet upon a bed of flowers
 O'erarch'd with fragrant bows of various dye,
 As in palace on a bed of down,
 Canopy'd with gold, and hung with damask.

[Exit.

Enter PALANTE, as from list'ning.

Pal. Oh villainy unparallel'd!--Dire fiend!
 Such was the prince of darkness, when from
 heav'n
 To the abyfs below, the King of truth
 Hurl'd him, for falshood and impiety;
 His power of guilt extended not to one,
 All, all he mark'd out for his horrid aim.
 Unsatisfy'd with poor *Valentia's* ruin,
 And thoughtless of his crimes, this villain seeks
 By stratagem to spoil *Philastus's* daughter.
 Thanks gracious heav'n, for this discovery!
 Just when his lustful hopes are rais'd up high,
 And bordering on the minute of enjoyment,
 I'll rush---prevent---it will be great revenge.

[Exit.

Enter EGEON solus.

Egeon. Oh that the world were on the edge of
 time!
 That all things might be swallow'd by oblivion.
 My mind is full of scorpions!--Every one
 I meet, I fancy, holds their fingers up,
 And points me out the father of *Valentia*.
 Ha! see!--'Tis she! Oh the audacious harlot!

Comes

Comes she with *Siren* looks and soothing voice,
 To make her shame sit light upon my heart,
 To melt me to forgive and to forget?
 She shall not.---No!

Enter VALENTIA and IANTHE.

Val. Oh Sir! unbend that brow!
 Look with compassion on your mournful daughter!
 Recall---Recall---
Lyfander's dreadful doom of banishment,
 Hasten to *Arcafius*---Get him instant freed.
 He must not leave his native land for me!
 For me in foreign cities bear the scoff
 Of lewd reproachers, and perhaps in rage
 Commit a deed his life must answer for.

Egeon. Com'st thou to me---to me to supplicate
 For one that has spread ruin o'er thy head?
 For one that has for ever stain'd that line
 From which with pride thou might'st have told thy
 birth?

Val. No more. --- Reproach me not. --- Behold
 my breast!---
 If thou hast fortitude---drench deep thy steel
 In this unwholesome blood---but spare *Lyfander*!

Ian. Oh! why wilt thou provoke a father's
 rage?
Desist Valentia.---Plead not for him more.

Val. Stand off, *Ianthe*!—See! my breast is bare!
 Strike home!—Thou seest I do not shrink—my
 heart

Bounds

Bounds for the stroke, and from a father's hand,
So lightly will the dying minutes fly,
I shall not feel one pang at parting.

Egeon. Ha! —
Be firm my resolution! — Yes! thou shalt
Have thy request. — Die! and with thee die
The shame thou hast brought down upon thy race!
And shall I add a guilt of blacker dye
To the disgrace already thrown upon me?
Murder my child! — oh! impious and unnatural!
Imbrue my hand in the dear blood that sprung
From my own veins! — Oh how my senses war
Within me! and yet shall that blood so foul,
Live a remembrancer of my dishonour?
No! Die *Valentia*! — (*offering to kill her.*)

Ian. Hold! — Oh hold thy hand! —
Give not the world an everlasting cause
To bear about thy name in scurril mirth.
Let not the busy tongue of rancour say,
Egeon stain'd him with his daughter's blood,
Because she liv'd to be unfortunate.

Val. Oh no! they rather will applaud his justice,
And say how gloriously his dagger sped,
That shed at once the stream of his dishonour.
Then speed thy tardy vengeance — give the blow!

Egeon. My reason staggers, and my stern resolves
Are soften'd into tenderness and pity.
I could rush eagerly into her arms,

And

And breathe the fondness of a father there.
 But oh! it must not be!—no more those hours
 That smiling fled on fond endearment's wing,
 Can be renew'd! now one continual round
 Of misery and woe is doom'd for me!
 I cannot say farewell, tho' I perhaps
 May never see her more!—Oh fortune! fortune!
 [Exit.]

Remain VALENTIA and IANTHE.

Val. Stay!—Oh stay my father!—Wilt thou
 leave me,
 Thus tortur'd on the rack of wild uncertainty!
 Shall I not know my fate? Oh! must he go
 For ever!—must I never see him more!
 Must I no more be happy to behold him?
 No more die hourly gazing on his face,
 And by degrees meet death in his disdain.
 Ah! now, perhaps, when he is borne away,
 Far from my hopes, unable to return,
 He may repent, and wish he had not wrong'd
 me.

Ianthe! What a cruel thought is this?
 Shall I not live and wish—and wish in vain,
 And die in the extremest misery,
 To think he wish'd to see me e'er I dy'd?

Ian. How wild! how empty that imagination?
 Ne'er think a man so harden'd in his guilt,
 When he's abroad will pass one thought on you:
 New beauties will attract his wandering eyes,

Subject

Subject him to deceit, to shame and danger;
 He may indeed, when he is doom'd to suffer
 Worse punishment than now he must endure,
 Reflect, and with a penitential eye
 Look back upon the sum of his past deeds,
 And wish, but wish too late, he had been guiltless.

Val. Ah, there, *Ianthe*! — there I feel a pang
 That wounds me to the soul! — he may commit, —
 But I'll not live to hear it; — this is the gift,
 The legacy my father's left me — thus! —

*(She takes up the dagger her father had thrown
 away, and offers to stab herself, but is pre-
 vented by Ianthe.)*

Ian. Assist me, heav'n! — oh rash — oh! mad
Valentia!

Wilt thou in spite of all the certain pains
 Thou'rt sure to suffer, thus destroy thy life?

Val. Unkind *Ianthe*! — but thou shalt not long
 Prevent me thus! — the flinty walls will pity me.
 They will nor shrink nor push my head away
 When I shall dash my brains into their face.
 The river will not tarry in its course
 If I shall fling myself into its gulph.
 And therefore how much kinder they than thou?
 Remember me to my unconscious rival,
 Tell her I haply have preserv'd her virtue,
 And bid her wet my mem'ry with a tear!
 Farewell!

[Exit.]

Ian.

Ian. Ha! mad and desolate *Valentia*!
 While I have life thou shalt not die alone;
 Nor shall have power to be thine own destroyer.
 [Exit after her.]

SCENE the Palace.

Enter *ARCASIUS* and *Attendants*.

Arc. Ha! canst thou hear no tidings of my son?

Attend. None, sov'reign Liege; --- with diligence and care

We've search'd the palace, and inquir'd of all
 Who likeliest were to give intelligence.

Arc. 'Tis certain the diseases of my fate
 Have all conspir'd to plague me on this day!
 I never knew an hour of solid grief
 From infancy till now! --- the thoughts
 Of slavery sat light upon my heart
 To what I feel!

Enter a *Servant*.

Serv. Royal Sir,
 One call'd *Philaustus* presses for an audience.

Arc. Admit him to our presence. --- Ha! *Philaustus*!
 Some strange concern must bring him to the court.

Enter *PHILASTUS*.

Welcome *Philaustus* to this place of sorrow!

Phi. Good heav'n forbid! --- say not that sorrow's
 here!

Health, royal Sir; all joys attend the day.

This

This morn, conducted by *Erasmus*' son,
 Youthful *Lysander*, my heart's darling child,
 I sent to pay her duty to the court;
 But hearing of his deeds by *Egeon*'s daughter,
 I have with all the speed a father could
 To save his child, hasten'd to her protection.

Arc. And dost thou think, *Philastrus*, we should
 prove

Ungrateful by being careless of her danger?
 No; tho' thou'rt harsh, and think'st severely of us,
 Thy daughter's safety has employ'd our care? ---
 Hasten one of you and bring *Ephelia* forth.

Phi. Forgive th' impatience of a tender father,
 Who thinks each hour in absence of his child,
 Tedious as years.

Enter the Servant.

Ser. She is not to be found.
 Those of her chamber say she disappear'd
 Much at the time your son, *Palante*, did.

Phi. Curse on thy villain's tongue, for saying so.
 Ha! disappear'd! --- and with *Palante* too!
 Son of the king --- distraction! has she 'scap'd
 The talons of the kite, to fall a prey
 To the rapacious, greedy vulture's beak!
 Where has the villain borne away my child?
 Tell me ye panders! --- ye abettors tell me!
 Ye that are secret to all horrid actions;

F Tell

Tell me where thou hast seen my child convey'd?
 What guilty place thy cruel master chose
 To rifle her of all her virgin sweets!

Arc. But that thou'rt old and splenetic, *Philastus*,
 Thy false injurious charge upon my son
 Should not pass with indulgence. --- Go; be more---
 Be more of temper.

Phi. How! tamely submit---
 Be accessory to my child's undoing!
 Patiently see the darling of my soul
 The slave of villainous and loose desire!
 No! sooner shall this stately gorgeous tower
 Be seen in flames, and by *Philastus*' hand!

Arc. Away! thou art too warm! ---

Phi. And thou too cool.
 Thou canst with temper see thy son destroy
 Monarchial order, and those very laws,
 Which by thy predecessors have been made,
 And by thyself commanded to be kept;
 Preach not to me of warmth; hadst thou a
 daughter,
 The comfort of thy age---thy life's support,
 Wouldst thou, when thou hadst sent her to thy
 friend
 With gratitude, with confidence and honour,
 Be cool and temperate, when thou didst hear
 She had by beastly hands been dragg'd away,
 To fate the lust of an unnatural son,
 The son of him in whom thou hadst confided.
 Ha! --- wouldst thou then be temperate --- then
 be cool?

Arc.

Arc. Dreamer! forbear! or thou shalt quickly
find

My temper can be blown to such a blaze
As thou shalt tremble to behold! — the seeds are
sown,

And if but once set fire to, that hoar aspect,
Those grizly locks, those furrow'd marks of time,
Shall not protect thee from my just resentment.

Phi. Ha! just resentment! — talk'st thou then
of justice?

Where is my daughter? thou inglorious king!
Stands thou unmoved, and yet dare talk of justice?
Unmov'd to hear thy little-minded son,
That sordid spoiler! that infilial thief!
Has stol'n from thee, a treasure not thine own,
A jewel of inestimable worth!
To feast his lewd luxurious appetite!
Curse on his fraudulent heart! — and curse all those,
Who loudly thunder in the cause of justice,
Yet dare to trample on its sacred rules!

Arc. Ha! does the traitor, conscious of our
power,
And in despite of hospitality,
Pour forth phlegmatic oaths, and foul invectives,
Against our person and approv'd good conduct?

Phi. What conduct, or what hospitality
Hast thou display'd to my defenceless child?
Oh! I would sooner, like that impious king,
That reign'd in Babylon, be doom'd to live
In desert wilds amidst the savage herd,
To feast as they do, to forget myself,

And work their passage thro' my mould'ring bones,
And in despite of bondage give me freedom.
This I will bear with fortitude of soul,
If thou wilt safely give me back my child.

[*Exit guarded.*]

ARCASIUS *solus.*

Arc. Oh ! gods ! this tempest is not to be borne !
My mind is rack'd upon a thousand wheels !
My son can never be dishonourable ;
No ; --- I have train'd him in the road of virtue,
From which I think he has not deviated.
I never could perceive his temper prone
To vice of any kind. On the reverse
His name is fix'd, unblemish'd, white and spotless.
Ah ! why then should I in defence of that,
Be forc'd to use the rigour of my power ?
Too choleric, *Philastrus* ! --- I must pity,
Tho' driven to condemn. --- Oh fortune, hear
Thy servant breathe to thee his earnest prayer.
As thou o'er-rul'st with universal sway,
Dispel the cloud that low'rs upon to-day.
Give me to know if I've erroneous stray'd,
Or left the worship of thy shrine unpaid.
That with returning zeal I may adore,
And never wander from thy precepts more.

[*Exit.*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A TRAGEDY.

ACT V.

SCENE *a Grove.**Enter LYSANDER and EPHELIA.*

LYSANDER.

OH! why wilt thou with unavailing rage
 Thus harrow up thy soul?---Thy bosom heaves
 Like seas wild driven by tempestuous winds.
 Thy eyes flash light'ning forth, as if they meant
 To fix me lifeless at thy angry feet.
 Oh! be more mild, thou idol of my soul!
 Let love succeed the boisterous tempest past,
 And take his turn to reign.

Eph. Inhuman robber!

Oh! that I had a tongue like some loud trumpet
 To thunder in thy ears, to deafen thee,
 To make thee senseless, and if possible,
 To blunt that treach'rous organ of thy speech,
 That thou might'st no more use it to subdue
 Poor credulous, unwary innocents.

Lys. Sweet railer! Hast thou not one grain of
 pity?

Must I a banish'd man, for ever go
 Unbless'd, unpity'd, from my native land?
 Could I, thou dear employer of my thoughts,

Thou

Thou being of my soul, thou matchless fair
Go hence without the joy of an adieu ?

Eph. Go bid farewell to her that weeps for
thee.

To her thou hast made wretched.---Vile seducer !
To her thou should'st devote thy latest hour.
Fall at her feet, implore to be forgiven,
And from the horror of unheard despair,
Bring her to life, to love, and future bliss.

Lys. I swear by yon bright orb,—yon azure
field,
Thou art the sole possessor of my heart !
Why shou'd *Valentia* weep for me, when the
king's son

Pursues her with an honourable love ?

Eph. Because she loves, because she is undone.

Lys. No more of her — 'tis frivolous and
empty.—

The present now's for love—for love my fair !
Let me then press thee to my eager breast !
Thus drink the lustre of thy starry eyes !
Infuse the nectar of thy balmy breath,
And lie dissolv'd in transport in thy arms !

Eph. Oh ! monster ! — ravisher ! — unheard of
villain !

Where are thy ruffians ? — call them to thy aid.
Employ the power of that infernal depth,
From whence thou cam'st, to force me to thy will,
To drag me to thy brutal, savage arms,

Lys.

Lys. Nay, if thou'rt clam'rous and provok'st
my power,
I'll instantly inforce it.—Come—unbend—
This shade devoted to the *Paphian* queen
Can never blab, nor tell about thy shame.

Eph. My shame?---detested---execrated fiend!
I'll rend the welkin with incessant cries,
And every bough that shades this grove shall
tremble
Ere thou compleat'st thy horrid, black design!

Lys. Nay, this must be prevented ---- ho!----
come forth!

Eph. Oh! heav'n protect me!----guard me!
save me now!----

Enter PALANTE, with his sword drawn.

Pal. Oh! monster!----fell barbarian!----turn
and see

The man prepar'd to forward thy design!
Thy panders I have frighted from thy service,
And lo! I come to act in both their steads.

Eph. Oh! blessed be the power that sent him
hither!

Lys. Damnation! has my evil star conspir'd
To dash me in the very hour of blifs?
Curse on its influence! and may its fire
Burn with still hotter plagues, to blast this fool,
Consume his hopes, as he now frustrates mine.

Pal. Retire, *Ephelia*---in yon copse you'll find
A faith-

A faithful few to guard thee, till the fates
Determine on whose side the scale shall turn.

[*Exit Ephelia.*

Now lurking coward! the wish'd for time is come
When thou shalt answer for thy horrid deeds.

At least, I will not quit this place with life,
Till thou ly'st dead and bleeding at my feet.

Guard thou thy life, and if thy sword prevails
O'er mine, thyself and all the world must own,
I drew it in the cause of innocence.

To save a virgin from a villain's hand,

A recreant! who to force her to his lust,

Brib'd bloody miscreant ruffians to his aid!

Lys. Thus far I've given thee to unload thy
breast,

Lest dying, thou should'st struggle to unfold
The rage thou now hast utter'd.—to thy heart—

Pal. No, first to thine!

Enter EPHELIA running.

Eph. Distraction!—oh my fears!—

Hide—hide those dreadful instruments of death,
Nor wildly hazard thus your lives for me!

LYSANDER, falling.

Ha! light'ning blast thy power!—thy fate's the
stronger.-----

Now thou mayst boast indeed!—thou'st conquer'd
him

That

That bore a soul above the race of man.----
 Oh! vanity too late thy error's found!
 Too late I find accumulated vice
 Can never pass unpunish'd to the grave.----
 I'm hurt---my pride is hurt to fall beneath
 The sword of him I hated and despis'd!
 Futurity! how dark thou look'st upon me!
 Myriads of ghastly forms croud on my view,
 Shaking their locks and staring me to madness!---
 I go---the light fades on my sight---Adieu!
Valentia!---wrong'd *Valentia!*----oh!---farewel!

[Dies,

Pal. Valentia!---ha!---she has his last farewell!
 Her name hung on his dying lips, as if
 They wished to keep it there for ever.
 Oh! how I pity thee in thy last moments!
 Thy perfidy, the discord thou hast made,
 I could forget and bathe thy wounds with tears!---
 Weep not, *Ephelia*? lovely mourner cease.
 Forget this scene of horror, and rejoice
 That thou art rescu'd, sav'd from wretchedness.--
 See that the body is with care convey'd,
 Where with his kindred he shall sleep in peace.

[Exeunt.

SCENE a Prison.

Enter PHILASTUS in Chains.

Phil. Well-hast thou mighty king perform'd
 thy promise!

These

These walls, these damps, an emblem of thy heart,
 Chills me with cold, and tortures me with pain.
 My arms, unable to support their weight,
 Hang feebly down, else should these fetters clank
 With mortal force against my hoary brow,
 And shorten your desire of punishment.
 Yet shall I live in torments to compleat
 The wishes of a proud unfeeling king,
 When these projecting flints can end my days,
 And give me instant death?---come, oh! my
 child,
 If yet thou liv'st not lost to all the world,
 Come with thy rays of comfort and dispel
 The supernumerary gloom that reigns
 With more than midnight horror in this place.
 Oh come and bless my eyes ere they are clos'd,
 Ere they for ever---ever shut thee out.

Enter EPHELIA and PALANTE.

Illusion!--doth my fancy paint this form
 To mock my view?-----or is it my *Ephelia*?----
 My child!--come to my arms--ha!--yet stand
 off.----

Art thou my child and spotless as this morn
 When I deliver'd thee to false *Lysander*?

Say, art thou virtuous?----art thou still the same?

Eph. The same as when my tender mother bore
 me.

Oh! Sir! look kindly on this guardian youth?

He

He sav'd your child from wretchedness and
shame.

She had been forc'd, polluted, dragg'd to fate
The raging lust of an inhuman man,
Had not this youth by providential power,
Mark'd his design, and ere he could compleat it,
Surpris'd him, and for greater guilt than this,
Wrongs self-sustain'd; the pride of all his soul
Betray'd to misery and endless shame,
He dar'd him to the sword, and justly took
A life long forfeit by abhorred guilt.

Phil. Come to my arms thou darling of my
soul!

Oh may'st thou ever shun the road of danger!
May heaven's all-ruling power be ever near,
And guard thee safe when I shall be no more!
Youth! canst thou lose in an old man's embrace,
The groundless doubts, and weak suspicions
rais'd,

Upon thy honour and thy peerless virtue?
Thou hast instead of a low-minded spoiler,
Prov'd a protector, and a guardian friend;
A friend to innocence---my child's deliverer!

Pal. No more---thou hadst the feelings of a
father,

Let that plead your excuse---I did but what
All honest men, that wear the cause of justice
Stamp'd on their natures, would to save the
virtuous.

Oh

Oh ! had I by the same protecting power,
 Been led to rescue from the spoiler's hand
 The lost *Valentia*, ere his poisonous breath,
 Had like a mildew blasted all her whiteness !

Lyfander ! I have laid thee low in earth,
 To sleep eternal if thy deeds will let thee ;
 I wander like a discontented ghost,
 To bear the misery thou didst create.

Phil. *Lyfander* !---oh ! misguided hapless youth !
 Thou'lt met thy guilt's reward--- I will not
 mourn---

Thou sought'st the ruin of my only child,
 And therefore justly art thou laid in dust.
 Now I can bear this dungeon and these chains.
 And fancy all the joys of paradise
 Are center'd in this gloom---*Ephelia's* smiles
 Will guild the hour and make confinement easy.

Pal. Forgive me, reverend Sir, these chains ere
 now,
 By the king's order, shou'd have been dissolv'd.---
 Off---off rude manacles !---those aged hands
 Can ill support a load of galling iron ;
 These limbs unus'd to limits, bear restraint !

Phil. An old man's blessing aye attend his steps !
 I wrong'd his justice, and I stain'd his honour,
 And does he in return to my demerits,
 Release me from they pains the have inflicted ?

Enter

Enter ARCASIUS.

Arc. Yes, old *Philasius*, thou shalt own our heart,
 Tho' rigid on the side of punishment,
 Is not entirely lost to human pity.
 'Twas justice sent thee here, to let thee know
 The name of majesty shou'd ever be
 Held sacred, and what pow'r should wait the call
 Of kings when their good deeds are call'd in
 question.
 Be free ---- make no reply ---- thy silence will
 Express thy gratitude as well as words.

Enter VALENTIA and IANTHE.

Val. I will have way --- no guards shall inter-
 cept me.----
 What tho' the king be there? ---- what tho' his
 son,
 Regardless of my grief, should taunting say,
 Behold the sword that shed *Lyfander's* blood.
 I have beheld him in the arms of death.
 Oh! let me see his executioner?----
 Ha! that is he----here let me kneel and bless----
 Bless that inhuman hand that shed the blood
 Of him I held the dearest in the world.
 Oh kill me too! ---- thy work is but half done.---
 Thou art but half a murderer.---Here plunge the
 sword
 That reach'd the heart of my ador'd *Lyfander*!
 Thou

Thou can'st not rest ---- I am his living half----
 I'll plague thee too --- I'll chase thee up and down,
 Till my avenging hand has hurl'd a bolt
 Of deadly fury on thy cruel head!

Pal. Oh! sad *Valentia* calm thy wounded
 mind?----

Look cheery up, and if thou canst forget
 The scene of thy past actions --- in these arms
 Find a repose, a refuge from thy sorrow,
 And with thy smiles, hold up my fainting heart!

VALENTIA *raving.*

Ha! ---- hark? ---- *Ianthe*! ---- mark that plea-
 sing voice?

It is *Lyfander's*. ---- See he beckons me! ----

Oh! that bewitching smile! ---- thou shalt not---
 no! ----

Forbear---first let the priest unite our hands.---

There needs no oath! ---- oh my bewilder'd brain!

Where is my father! ---- oh! let me behold him!

Let me implore forgiveness at his feet,

Ere death has laid his leaden hand upon me,

Preventing the last wish my soul can form.

Ian. Oh! yet be comforted?----thy father soon
 Will bring forgiveness, and forget the past;
 Building fond hopes upon thy future life.

Val. Heart-piercing sight!---

Behold he bleeds! ---- oh what a gash is there!

Oh! murderous hand that gave this fatal wound!

He

He dies! ---- help! ---- save him! ---- save him gra-
cious gods!

It will not be! ---- lo! on the earth he lies.
And now he sinks to realms of endless night! ----
Hark! hark! ---- that voice! ---- how dismal and
how low!

It whispers sadly in my wounded ear!
It bids me come ---- yes dearest shade ----
I'll follow thee ---- I will not linger long ----
Thou'rt all in darkness ---- close not thus your eyes,
Their light will lead me thro' the dreary way,
And I shall find thee sooner! ---- now, *Ianthe*!
Lay me ---- oh lay me gently on the ground.
I'm weak ---- my spirits fail me, and my eyes
Grow heavy ---- but they will revive when I
Have claspt ---- oh! ---- now I die ---- forgive me
heav'n! [Dies.

Pal. She's gone! she's fled for ever from my
hopes! ----

Oh! Royal Sir! behold the desolation
Death has committed on the fairest frame
That ever nature gave to bless the world!
And oh forgive me if I shed a tear,
My last sad office on her poor remains.
How pale! how lilly-like that face that once
Bore the fine crimson of the lively rose!
Those eyes that with their beams chear'd all around,
Are clos'd, and set in everlasting night.
Thou'rt gone where calumny can never hurt thee.
Let

Let all the tongues of slander and reproach,
 Upbraid thee with thy deeds, thou art secure,
 And canst not feel the malice of their sting.
 Oh ! may'st thou find that happiness below,
 Thy pitiless hard fate deny'd thee here !

Arc. Oh son ! my heart thrills with uncommon
 sorrow !

Egeon, tho' he sought to take her life,
 Will suffer worse than death when he beholds
 His lilly blasted in the prime of youth,
 No more to know the nourishment of spring.
 Oh poor seduc'd, undone, lamented girl !

Eph. Wilt thou not dry my eyes ? ---- wilt thou
 not stop

This flood of unavailing tears !----

Phil. Weep on----

It shews a tender sympathetic heart.
 Oh ! what an emblem, my *Ephelia*, was
 The thrush that died this morning at your feet,
 Of this heart-wounding melancholy scene ?

Ian. Now why shou'd I desire to drag about
 A life weigh'd down by more than mountain
 weight.----

This I procur'd in case of what has happen'd,

[*Discovers a phial.*

Resolv'd not to survive this faded flower ! [*Drinks.*

PALANTE running to prevent her.

Ha !----rash unthinking maid.

G

Ian.

Ian. It is too late.—

The potent juice already works its way,
And to immediate death has given its power.
I vow'd not to survive my hapless friend.
But ah! how strong the workings of despair!
I council'd her not to destroy her life,
And now I've laid hands upon my own!—
Oh merciful and gracious heav'n! forgive
The frenzy of a soul by friendship torn;
Let---that procure me pardon---oh my heart!

[*Dies.*]

E G E O N *within.*

This way she came---for here I mark'd her
steps.--- [Enters,
Oh! horror!---- death! now thou hast done thy
worst!
Cold, cold and breathless ---- oh! my fairest
flower!
Wilt thou no more unfold thy balmy leaves?
No more give odours to the fragrant spring.
Thy bright lamps too are faded! not one beam
Remains to light me onward to the grave!
And cou'dst thou leave me without one adieu?
Thou didst not feel the anguish of my soul,
Else thou would'st sure have staid a little moment,
To say farewell. --- Break --- break my stubborn
heart!
Thou canst not long sustain this load of woe.
In spite of misery the hour is near

That

That must relieve me---here I'll lay me down,
Till I incorporate with my child in dust.

[Falls down by the body.]

Arc. Oh! miserable man! nor crowns nor
empires,

Nor all the pageantry of kings and kingdoms,
Tho' profer'd at thy feet, could bribe thee now
To relish life. ---- oh force of lawless love!
From thee what pains misguided mortals prove!
The maid, that blindfold leaves the thorny way,
And seeks amidst the open fields to stray,
Where sensual joys and pleasures of an hour,
At once their virtue and their name devour.
Gives up to gratify a wilful flame,
Their future lives to misery and shame!

[Exeunt omnes.]

F I N I S.

E R R A T A

Page. Line.

- 41, 4, *read* foul malignant fiend !
43, 7, *read* Ha ! Who gave thee the liberty to rail ?
ibid. 18, for drove, *read* driven
44, 19, for bofom, *read* bofom.
-